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The Signal



Friday, Dec. 19, 2008

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News Update

Happy Holiday
This is the final edition of the Signal for 2008. We wish you a happy and safe holiday season.

LEADERSHIP SENDS HOLIDAY MESSAGE

Our Army remains committed to the safety and well being of our Soldiers, Families and Civilians. Facing significant challenges these last several years, our team has performed magnificently. However, it makes sense during the holiday season that all our leaders remain vigilant and involved to ensure our Soldiers stay alert to all the hazards and frustrations they may face during the holidays. The holiday season can be a tough time for many. Those who engage in excessive alcohol or drug abuse, those who exhibit behaviors and other symptoms signaling depression or a sense of hopelessness are all especially vulnerable and susceptible to irrational acts, to include suicide. The key to mitigating risk is always good leadership, especially our first-line supervisors, and their ability to intervene with Soldiers exhibiting high risk behaviors.

In the New Year, we will re-double our efforts to enhance resilience across the force, and increase our physical, mental and emotional strength.

We will improve access to a continuum of comprehensive care and programs that enhance life skills. We ask that you go the extra mile in reminding all leaders about the challenges of the holiday season.

Thanks for all that you do for Soldiers, Families, and Civilians.

George W. Casey, Jr.
General, United States Army Chief of Staff

Pete Geren
Secretary of the Army

School board honors Soldier volunteers

Siobhan Carlile
Signal Staff

The Richmond County Board of Education recognized Soldier volunteers at the Dec. 11 board meeting.

About 40 Soldiers, students and cadre at the Regimental Noncommissioned Officer Academy, set up and networked computers at the Freedom Park Elementary School on Fort Gordon and at A.R. Johnson Health Science and Engineering Magnet High School on a Saturday in November as part of a community service project. At the board meeting each Soldier's name was announced and listed on the board agenda. Each Soldier was presented with a certificate of appreciation for their contribution to the Richmond County Schools.

Dr. Dana Bedden, Richmond County School superintendent, talked with the Soldiers, briefly mentioned his own service as both an enlisted service member and as an officer; and expressed his appreciation for their time and talent and above all their selfless service in protecting the liberties that everyone enjoys in America every day.

The Soldiers listed on page 15 were involved during the community service at A.R. Johnson and at Freedom Park.

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Dr. Dana Bedden, Richmond County School superintendent, congratulates one of the Fort Gordon Soldiers who were honored at a board of education meeting in Augusta Dec. 11.



Photo by Rick Pittman

Next generation Signal Warriors inducted

Bonnie Heater
Signal staff

A new generation of Signaleers stepped forward to receive the Regimental crest during the 15th Regimental Signal Brigade's induction ceremony held Dec. 15 in front of Signal Towers.

Proud parents, friends and other Family members snapped quick photos of their daughters and sons standing in formation before the ceremony began.

Soldiers from the 447th Signal Battalion, 369th Signal Battalion, and 551st Signal Battalion, "Watch and Warn," were pinned by senior noncommissioned officers.

Following the pinning ceremony everyone moved to Alexander Hall for the graduation ceremony which was held at 3 p.m.

According to Maj. David Hernandez, 15th Regimental Signal Brigade S-3, a total of 574 Soldiers graduated as Signaleers. [The S3 is the battalion commander's principal staff officer for matters concerning operations, plans, organization, and training.] "Sixty-five percent of the graduates were active duty and 30 to 35 percent were in the National Guard or reserves, he said. "Female Soldiers made up 22 percent of the graduating class."

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Photos by Bonnie Heater

(Above) Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Clark, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon command sergeant major, stands center stage in Alexander Hall dressed in combat apparel to recite the poem "Ragged Old Flag," at the opening of the 15th Regimental Signal Brigade's graduation Dec. 15. (Right) First Sergeant Donna Cogan, Company D, 447th Signal Battalion, pins the Signal Corps Regimental crest on Pvt. James Price's uniform during the 15th Regimental Signal Brigade's Induction ceremony held in front of Signal Towers.



Command show encourages proactive holiday safety

Charmain Z. Brackett
Correspondent

Pvt. Andrew Sunderland's Family waited for him to return home to Oregon before decorating the Christmas tree.

But before Sunderland, of the 369th Signal Battalion, could leave Fort Gordon for home and the Christmas trees, his superiors wanted to make sure he and his fellow Soldiers were safe during the holidays.

Trainees, such as Sunderland, attended one of eight performances of the annual Safety Show at Alexander Hall. His company attended during the 11 a.m. Dec. 15 show.

A mix of light-heartedness and tragic reality, the Safety Show highlighted the dangers that can befall anyone during the holidays. "Many of your friends will want to return you

to who you used to be," said Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, who made an in-person visit as well as a visit via video. "Think before you act."

Video clips of memorial services for Soldiers who didn't return from block leave as well as skits re-iterated the messages of not drinking and driving, staying away from illegal drugs, maintaining gun safety, driving while alert and not trying to drive when sleepy and fire safety.

One skit showed what could happen if a Soldier leaves his bags unattended as a group of terrorists packed his duffel full of explosives.

But the reality is that some Soldiers who've watched the Safety Show in the past have become victims of tragedy.

In December 1999, Pfc.



Photo by Charmain Z. Brackett

One skit during the Fort Gordon Holiday Safety Show Dec. 15 in Alexander Hall demonstrated the danger of leaving bags unattended.

Ben Donaldson left Fort Gordon for his holiday leave. He had planned to be married on Dec. 22; how-

ever, on Dec. 19, the driver of the vehicle Donaldson was in fell asleep. The vehicle went into the Arkan-

sas River. Donaldson pushed the driver's wife and baby out of the car, but he was unable to get out of the car and died.

This year, 117 Soldiers have died in car accidents. Another Fort Gordon Soldier who attended a safety briefing and admitted in a video that he didn't think anything tragic would happen to him was Pvt. Reginald Denney of the 369th Signal Battalion who watched his home go up in flames on Christmas Day.

Foley urged Soldiers to return from Christmas break safely.

"You don't know how important you are to us. You are important to your Families, and these leaders are looking for you to come back safely," he said.

Around Town

Concerts with a cause, lights and plays abound

By **Charmain Z. Brackett**
Correspondent

The holidays are a festive time of the year with musical productions, plays, light displays, historically themed programs and other events; however, there is one event taking place this weekend that is unlike any other.

Christmas in the Quarters focuses on the holidays from a very different perspective.

Held at Beech Island’s Redcliffe Plantation State Historic Site, the Christmas in the Quarters program shows how slaves would have observed the holidays more than 150 years ago.

Green coffee beans were among the gifts enslaved Families received at Christmas. A demonstration of how they would have ground the beans will be part of the program.

Also, Kitty Wilson-Evans, an historical interpreter from Historic Brattonsville, will portray a slave named Kessie to provide visitors a greater insight into the program.

The authors of A Pictorial History of African Americans in Aiken County will be there to sign copies of the book, which benefit The Center for African American History, Art and Culture Aiken, S.C. Interactive presentations, games and tours of the historic slave quarters will also be a part of the program.

Christmas in the Quarters will be from 1 to 4 p.m. The cost is \$6 for adults, \$4 for ages 6 to 16 and free for children 5 years-old and younger. Call (803) 827-1473 for more information.

A Christmas Eve concert will help the United Methodist Children’s Home.

The St. John United Methodist Church choir and orchestra will present a concert and Lessons and Carols beginning at 10:30 p.m. Wednesday at the church at 736 Greene St.

The program is part of the Concerts with a Cause series which has raised more than \$64,000 for charities since it began in 2003.

For more information, call (706) 724-9641

Soldiers earn certifications

William Glenn
447th Signal Battalion

For the first time Information Technology Soldiers are leaving Fort Gordon with a coveted civilian certification.

On Dec. 12, six Soldiers from the 15th Regimental Signal Brigade in the Military Occupational Specialty 25B10 Information Technology completed their training and all requirements for the “Industry Standard” CompTIA Security+ certification.

The Soldiers were the first to participate in the, “Security+ Bridge,” a program created to meet Department of Defense Directive 8570-1.M and put certified IT Specialists (Information Assurance Technician Level II) in the field. The program creation was a combined effort between the School of Information Technology and Knowledge Systems Directorate.

Soldiers received technical training regarding Army policies and Best Business Practices, encryption and

authentication standards, and core Information Assurance concepts meeting the CompTIA objectives for certification examination. Soldiers received hands-on training with network packet filtering, port scanning/sniffing, steganography, working with Honeypots and monitoring network traffic to identify various network based attacks.

Kay Arnold, KSD director said, “This is a step forward in the process for the 25B10 Information Technology Specialist Course becoming a premiere IT training school.” KSD is restructuring the unit’s training materials to meet the CompTIA Security+ 2008 objectives and facilitate students challenging the industry certification exam starting Oct, 09.

Several Soldiers commented about the program acknowledging that they are motivated and feel they can successfully perform everything they are required to do. One Soldier said, “This is the stuff I joined the 25B MOS for.”



Community Events

Holiday gift wrapping

The Fort Gordon Service Club will once again be hosting holiday gift wrapping in the PX lobby until **Dec. 24** during operating hours. Gift wrapping will be done on a donation basis. Several dates will be available for wrapping for organizations on post that are eligible to do fundraising on Fort Gordon.

For more information contact Joannie Bryant at (706) 863-2931.

Military vacancies

The 208th Regional Support Group, an Army reserve logistics unit at Fort Jackson, has vacancies in many military occupational specialties in the rank of sergeant to lieutenant colonel.

For more information, call Maj. Glenn Baker at (803) 751-9724 or by e-mail at glenn.baker@usar.army.mil.

Holiday gift ideas

Looking for some great gifts for the upcoming holidays? Stop by the Thrift Shop which is operated by the Fort Gordon Service Club. It's located in Building 39102, which can be found in the Brems Barracks area at the Avenue of the States and 40th Street (behind the PX). It's open from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. every Tuesday and from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. the first Saturday of each month.

For more information call (706) 791-2779.

Ride sharing network

MilitaryRideShare.com is a way for service members to get home and

At the Movies

The Signal Theater is open Thursday-Sunday. Shows begin at 6:30 p.m. Admission is adults \$4, children \$2, under age 5 free. For information call (706) 791-3982.

Dec. 19 to Dec. 21

Friday -Closed

Saturday - Madagascar: Escape to Africa (PG) 2p.m.

Saturday - Quantum of Solace (PG-13)

Sunday - Closed

Note: Attendance at Fort Gordon's movie theater is strictly limited to authorized Post Exchange patrons.

celebrate with their Families.

Developers of the site encourage travelers to use the service when you go home for Christmas. Remember that the site is for all active duty service members and their dependent Family members. Retired service members can also use the site as well. By doing this, hopefully more connections can be made and folks like you can get the rides you are seeking.

Share the link with all your friends. The more people using the site, the better the odds you will find the ride you need.

Helping Marines, Sailors, Airmen, and Soldiers ride home together and save some green is the stated mission of the site.

Check out the website www.militaryrideshare.com for more information.

\$20,000 CID bonus

The Department of Defense recently approved a continuation of a \$20,000 lump sum Critical Skills Accession Bonus for active duty enlisted Soldiers who successfully complete the "311A - CID Special Agent" Warrant Officer Basic Course.

Enlisted CID Special Agents with at least 24 months of CID investigative experience and a minimum of 60 credit-hours of college, and who are no longer on apprentice status, are eligible to receive the bonus.

For more information on CID visit www.cid.army.mil.

Warm Coat Drive

Take part in the 2008 Warm Coats and Warm Hearts Coat Drive with Burlington Coat Factory, ABC's Good Morning America and One Warm Coat.

Anyone who would like to donate coats for men women and children can do so during store hours in the drop box located in the Burlington Coat Factory at 1329 Augusta Parkway West. Coats should be in good condition, with working fasteners and no rips or stains. Donors will receive a receipt for tax purposes.

Drop coats off until Jan. 16, 2009. For more information call (706) 650-0544.

Woodworth Library Art Show

Each submission must be original work by Army Soldiers, retirees, civilians, other active duty personnel and their Families.

Submissions may be made to the following categories: 12 and under, 13-17, and 18 and older. There will be a 1st and 2nd place winner in each category.

Works may be submitted at the Library during normal hours of operation. They can be dropped off until Jan. 6, 2009. Artwork cannot be accepted on Fridays and outside of normal business hours.

When submitting artwork, a submission form must be completed. It is particularly important that we have a phone number and email address to contact the artist. Copies of the submission form can be picked up at the Library or printed from the Library website.

For more information, stop by the Library, or contact Jessica Thompson, at (706) 791-2449 or at jessica.e.thompson@us.army.mil.

Clean Air Campaign rolling

Sarah Waters

Cookerly Public Relations

ATLANTA – High gas prices, gas shortages, an increased emphasis on “going green,” a struggling economy – you name it – Georgia commuters had plenty of reasons in 2008 to rethink their commute. Across the region, more people stopped driving alone to work, choosing instead to carpool, vanpool, ride transit, telework, bicycle and walk. In fact, it wasn’t only commuters looking for alternatives. Employers also turned to The Clean Air Campaign and its partner organizations in record numbers to help their employees find a less expensive way to get to work.

The numbers speak for themselves:

* Participation rates went up 300 percent for the incentive programs aimed at getting people who drive alone to make the switch to an alternative.

* RideSmart, the region’s ridematching service, received 175 percent more applications from commuters looking for carpool, vanpool and bike partners than it did last year.

* Approximately 100 vanpools were formed this year. That’s more than double the number of vanpools formed in 2007.

“I love my vanpool, and not only because of the savings or our bad economy. I enjoy the people that I ride with,” said Dorothy Blagmon, a vanpooler who commutes from Lawrenceville to Norcross. “I started vanpooling because of high gas prices, and even though they’ve since gone down, I wouldn’t have it any other way. I don’t have to fight traffic, and I can sit back and relax all the way to my office door.”

Commuters like Dorothy pushed The Clean Air Campaign into overdrive as the requests for help poured in from individuals and employers. “We had never seen such intense interest in our programs,” said Kevin Green, executive director of the non-profit Clean Air Campaign. “We hired temporary help just to manage the calls and faxes that flooded our office. Most commuters and employers were seeking an immediate solution.”

This couldn’t have been truer than for Athens Regional Medical Center. It partnered with The Clean Air Campaign specifically because it needed help retaining employees who simply could not afford to get to work. For other companies, like Network Communications, Inc., having telework-capabilities already in place meant being empowered to navigate the gas shortage that hit Georgia with more ease.

“Telework programs are a critical part of any business continuity plan,” said Mike Williams, The Clean Air Campaign’s director of programs and employer services. “You never know when employees won’t be able to physically make it in to the office, and teleworking

can be the difference between closing your doors and business-as-usual.”

While commuters and employers embraced alternatives in a big way during 2008, this year also saw transportation take center stage in policy discussions. The year started with the business community championing a change to state law that would allow local and regional authorities to tax themselves in order to fund transportation improvements. Although the amendment was defeated by a narrow margin, the stage is set to revisit the legislation in 2009. Other 2008 transportation developments include the Governor’s “Investing in Tomorrow’s Transportation Today” program and the announcement that Georgia will receive funding for a pilot program to convert high occupancy vehicle lanes to high-occupancy toll lanes.

“This year has been phenomenal in many ways,” said Green. “Now is an exciting time to be in the business of creating traffic and air quality solutions that make Georgia a better place to live and work, and I anticipate that 2009 will be an outstanding year for The Clean Air Campaign and all of our regional partners.”

As 2009 comes into sight, gas prices are down and the shortage is over, but it looks like these changes in commuting habits are here to stay. In the past few months, the economy has many people looking for ways to cut back, and choosing a commute alternative is one way to save.

When asked if she ever plans to return to driving alone, Dorothy Blagmon was quick to respond: “Nope. I just got a break on my car insurance.”

The Clean Air Campaign thanks all of the commuters, employers, schools and partner organizations that made 2008 a record year and anticipates 2009 will be another landmark year for reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality.

For more information, visit www.CleanAirCampaign.com or call 1-877-CLEANAIR (1-877-253-2624).

ABOUT THE CLEAN AIR CAMPAIGN

The Clean Air Campaign is a not-for-profit organization that works with Georgia’s employers, commuters and schools to encourage actions that result in less traffic congestion and better air quality. To accomplish this goal, The Clean Air Campaign, along with its associate organizations, partners with more than 1,450 employers to create custom commute options programs; and annually helps thousands of commuters find commute alternatives that work for them, providing financial incentives to get them started. The Clean Air Campaign also protects public health by issuing smog alerts and empowers students, parents and teachers to play a positive role in reducing traffic and cleaning the air.

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from page 1

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Clark, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon command sergeant major, walked onto the stage clad in combat gear, and recited the poem, “Ragged Old Flag,” written by country singer Johnny Cash. “I walked through a county courthouse square; on a park bench an old man was sitting there. I said, “Your old courthouse is kinda run down.”

He said, “Naw, it’ll do for our little town.”

I said, “Your flagpole has leaned a little bit, And that’s a Ragged Old Flag you got hanging on it...”

“You see, we got a little hole in that flag there...When Washington took it across the Delaware. And it got powder-burned the night Francis Scott Key sat watching it writing _Oh Say Can You See...”And it almost fell at the Alamo...She turned

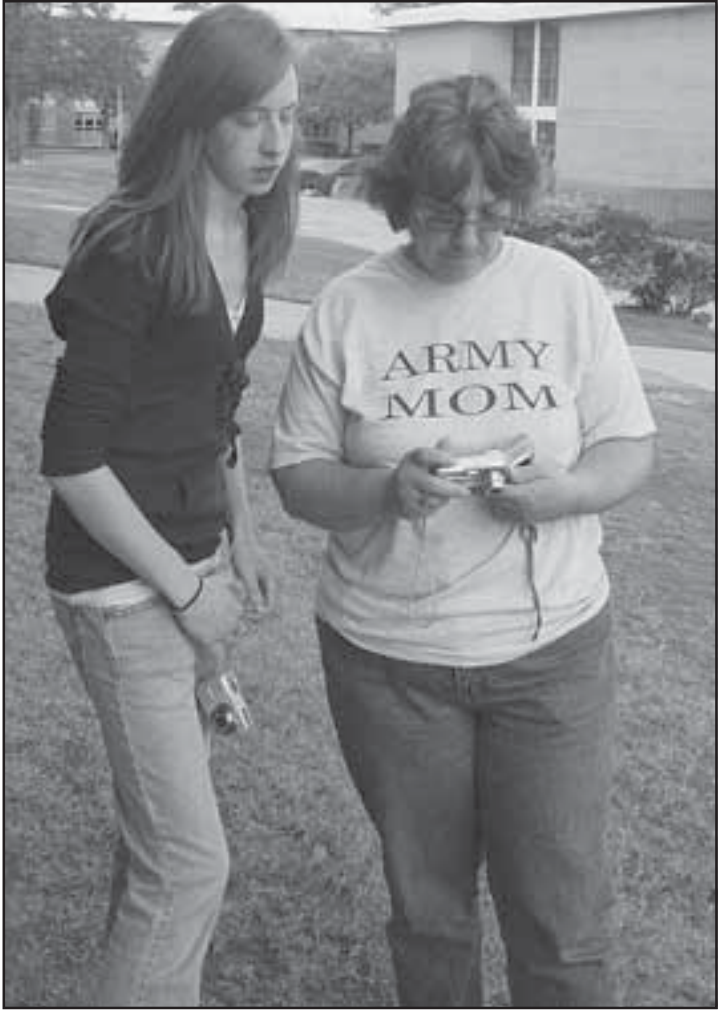


Photo by Bonnie Heater

Helen Rueth (*right*) views images of her son that she took while he was in formation minutes before the Signal Corps Induction ceremony took place Dec. 15 in front of Signal Towers on post. She is joined by Sheila Nechuta who accompanied her to Fort Gordon for the induction ceremony and later the graduation ceremony held in Alexander Hall.

blood red in World War II ...She hung limp and low by the time it was through.. She was in Korea and Vietnam. She went where she was sent by her Uncle Sam...she’s getting threadbare and wearing thin. But she’s in good shape for the shape she’s in. ‘Cause she’s been through the fire before And I believe she can take a whole lot more.”

So we raise her up every morning, Take her down every night. We don’t let her touch the ground And we fold her up right. On second thought I DO like to brag, ‘Cause I’m mighty proud of that Ragged Old Flag.”

The Signal Regimental History was then presented via video. Parents and Family members learned that it was an Army doctor who first conceived the idea of a separate, trained professional military signal service. Albert Myer proposed the Army use his visual communications system, called “wigwag,” while serving as a medical officer in Texas in 1856. When the Army adopted his system June 21, 1860, the Signal Corps was born, with Myer as the first Signal officer.

Following the video, Clark, the keynote speaker and former command sergeant major for the 15th Regimental Brigade, walked to the podium and said with pride, “I’m Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Clark and I am a Soldier.”

He spoke briefly about the all volunteer force and seven years of war. Clark mentioned Spc. Michael Carter, a Signaleer and Combat Cameraman, who recently earned a Silver Star in Afghanistan.

“Soldiers stick together and help one another, especially in combat,” he told the young Soldiers and their Families. Army Families also stick together...

“A lot of people in America say it’s hard to find a hero today,“ he said. “I disagree. They are looking in the wrong places. You won’t find them in the sports arena.

“Our heroes are the young men and women who are volunteering today in our military during a time of war,” Clark said. “They are enlisting and saying, “Send me.”

He explained to the parents and Family members present that most of the young Soldiers graduating today will see combat in 6 months. They will serve in Afghanistan, Iraq or some other area of the world where there is conflict,” he said...They will become battle hardened...

Clark concluded his speech with these words: “My name is Clark and I am a Soldier.”

During the graduation ceremony all the graduates stood to be recognized.

Distinguished and honor graduates of the 15th Regimental Signal Brigade were brought to the stage and given honor diplomas. The distinguished and honor graduates are limited to the top 20 percent of the academic and total Soldier concept, according to Clark. “ These Soldiers had to maintain a 90 percent or higher Grade Point Average to earn this honor,” he said.

The distinguished and honor graduates were Pfc. Sasha Adams, Pvts. Benjamin Ales and Maurice Birklett, Spc. George Bean, Spc. Bruce Carroll, Pvts. Allen Corbett, Chad Coldewey and Stephanie Dalzell, Pfc. Christian Daughterty, Pvts. Andrew Deason and Phillip Dennis, Pfc. Martin Dernar and Pfc. Christian Diaz-Nieves, Pvts. Kyle Domrzalski, Bradley Eisenhauser, Derric Franklin, Michael Funk, James Givens, Marcus Jackson, Alysia Jarmon, Michael Leahy, Pfc. Thomas Lepsch, Spc. Gregory Lindstron, Pvt. Jacob McCormack, Pfc. Erick Medina, Pvts. Gerardo Nunez, Elmer Parrish, Brandon Proctor, John Rainey, Pfc. William Righter, Pfc. Caleb Russ, Pvts. Charles Sawyer, Trevor Smith and Quan Thai and Pfc. Jenemian Simpson and Pfc. Francesca Spencer.

Viewpoint

INFORMATION, OPINIONS AND COMMENTARY

Drowsy driving by teens can cause heartache

Stephen Wallace
Summit Communications Management Corporation

In this season of downy flake, it might be tempting to think that poet Robert Frost had teens in mind when he wrote: “The woods are lovely, dark, and deep, but I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep. And miles to go before I sleep.” Sound familiar?

Now, of course, Frost’s traveler was on horseback, no doubt ameliorating some of today’s concerns regarding drowsy young people driving automobiles – a significant problem among teens, according to new research from Liberty Mutual Insurance and SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions).

Indeed, overscheduled, overstressed, and overtired teens are a threat to themselves – and others – as they too often climb behind the wheel having had too little sleep. For example, 36 percent of teen drivers say they frequently drive while tired in the morning. Perhaps more significant, they report getting an average of only 7.2 hours of sleep on school nights.

And that can have costly outcomes.

According to the survey, young people who get less than eight hours of sleep per night on average are twice as likely to say they have fallen asleep at the wheel (20 percent) than are teens who report getting an average of eight or more hours of sleep per night (10 percent).

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF), which recently promoted Drowsy Driving Prevention Week, says that the practice is an “under-reported and under-recognized public safety issue plaguing America’s roadways,” pointing out that it can be just as dangerous as impaired driving.

They may be onto something.

Drowsy driving causes more than 10,000 crashes each year,

leading to 40,000 injuries and 1,550 deaths, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Make no mistake about it, the combination of sleepiness, inexperience, and a tendency to drive at night and in the early morning hours puts young adults at risk for drowsy driving crashes.

Just as frightening are some of the strategies teens say they employ to try to stay awake.

- Playing loud music (49 percent)
- Talking on a cell phone (22 percent)
- Speeding (11 percent)
- Text messaging (11 percent)

Other concerns about sleepy teens include the relationship between insufficient rest and obesity, depression, drug abuse, and future cardiovascular disease, according to Byron J. Richards, a board-certified clinical nutritionist, who told NaturalNews.com, “Sleep problems in children and teens have reached a crisis level in America.”

So, what’s the remedy? More sleep.

The NSF recommends that teens should be getting between 8.5 and 9.5 hours of sleep to be fully rested. Others say the best number is even higher.

In either case, it sounds like a simple solution. In truth, it may be hard to achieve.

First of all, developmental prerogatives dictate that teens need more sleep than adults do – and just as their natural sleep rhythms shift to later cycles. In other words, during adolescence, teens are hard-wired to stay up later at night and sleep later in the morning. But still we torment them with early school starts and, often, morning commitments on weekends.

Thank goodness for the holidays! But then again, even though

they may have more chance to rest, teens’ holiday schedules remain cramped. And research suggests that holiday periods are particularly dangerous times of year on roads and highways.

What’s a busy teen to do? Here are a couple of tips from the NSF.

Use the buddy system – ask your passenger to stay awake during the drive, to help keep you awake, and to share the driving responsibilities.

If sleepiness sets in while driving, prevent a crash by pulling over to find a safe place to take a nap.

Of course, Mom and Dad have a role to play, too. Liberty Mutual/SADD research reminds us that parents are the most influential voices in their teens’ driving behaviors and that young people tend to drive more safely when they are presented with family driving rules that are enforced, such as:

Minimum sleep requirements in order to drive;

No driving after 10 p.m.; and

No cell phone use, including text messaging.

Unfortunately, “early to bed, early to rise” doesn’t synch well with suddenly nocturnal teens who are balancing late nights, early mornings, and jam-packed schedules. They want to do it all, but our job is to help them regulate competing demands in a way that keeps them safe behind the wheel.

Especially when they have miles to go before they sleep.

Stephen Wallace, national chairman of SADD and author of the new book *Reality Gap: Alcohol, Drugs, and Sex—What Parents Don’t Know and Teens Aren’t Telling*, has broad experience as a school psychologist and adolescent counselor. For more information about SADD, visit sadd.org. For more information about Stephen, visit stephengraywallace.com.

New Training and Doctrine Command leader in place



Courtesy Photo
Gen. Martin Dempsey

TRADOC Public Affairs Office

General Martin Dempsey assumed the duties of Commander, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command Dec. 8, after serving as Acting Commander U.S. Central Command.

Dempsey graduated from the United States Military Academy and was commissioned as an Armor officer in June 1974.

His most recent assignments included command of the 1st Armored Division in 2003 deploying

to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After completing 14 months in Iraq, Dempsey redeployed the division to Germany and completed his command tour in July 2005. In August 2005, Dempsey returned to Iraq and assumed command of the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq until summer 2007, when he departed for his next assignment as Deputy Commander of U.S. Central Command. In August 2007, Dempsey assumed the position of Deputy

Commander, U.S. Central Command, and served as Acting Commander, U.S. Central Command, from March 28, 2008 to Oct. 30, 2008.

Dempsey has several degrees and in August 1982, Dempsey began studies at Duke University, earning a Master’s Degree in English, and upon completion in 1984 was assigned to the English Department at West Point. He performed duties as an instructor, and later assistant professor, in the department until summer 1987,

when he was assigned to the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., where he earned a Master’s Degree in Military Art and Science. In July 1988, General Dempsey reported to the 3rd Armored Division in Friedburg, Germany, where he served as the Executive Officer of 4th Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, and then became Operations Officer and later Executive Officer for 3rd Brigade, 3rd Armored Division, deploying in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

In July 1991, Dempsey assumed command of the 4th Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment, 1st Armored Division.

In summer 1993, after five years in Germany, Dempsey was assigned as Chief of the Armor Branch at U.S. Total Army Personnel Command. He then continued his studies at the National War College in 1995, earning a Master’s Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies. In 1996, Dempsey took command of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Feedback...

By Bonnie Heater

What is your holiday wish this Christmas season?



I wish for my two little girls, Hannah and Isabelle, to have the best Christmas possible and I wish the new administration success as they take office in January.

Gunnery Sgt. Jared Bean
U.S. Marine Corps Detachment



I wish for a white Christmas. My husband Ryan and I are going to visit his family in Chicago for the holidays.

Spc. Katie Nyczaj
Religious Support Center



I want Santa Claus to bring me a million dollars.

Rob Hahn
Fort Gordon Firefighter



I want Santa to bring me all my bills with a zero balance.

Anthony McMurtry
Fort Gordon Firefighter



I wish as many Soldiers as possible could be with their families this season. I understand what it’s like to be deployed and away from your family during the holidays. I retired from the Army after 22 years of service as a first sergeant.

David Fappiano
Department of the Army Police



I want the Army to quit taking my shooting buddies and sending them on deployments.

David McCoy
Sportsman Club employee

Viewpoint

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Suggestion saves money, increases production

Anthony Ricchiazzi
Army News Service

TOBYHANNAARMYDEPOT, Pa. – Everyone knows that necessity is the mother of invention.

The necessity of readying radios for the warfighter sparked a suggestion that increased production and will save the taxpayer more than \$235,000 per year.

Nick Lipcavage and John Nicosia realized they can repair a component of the Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System, known as SINCGARS, that was coded non-repairable. Both are electronics mechanics in the Tactical Communications Division, Communications Systems Directorate. They earned a \$4,378.62 Army Ideas for Excellence Program suggestion award.

“In 2006, we received a large work order for the AN/ARC-201 airborne SINCGARS and we just started to repair the Band Pass Filter component of the radio out of the need to get product out the door rather than wait for new filters,” Lipcavage said.

The ARC-201 SINCGARS is used primarily in helicopters. The components filter out unwanted frequencies and at the time cost more than \$2,000 each, although Nicosia said the price has come down slightly.

They said there was a learning curve, including research to find out if parts of the component could be procured, but now they are repairing the filter regularly.

“We repair them in batches so they are ready for new workload,” Lipcavage said. “Once radios come in, we swap out the filters, which



Photo by Steve Grzezdinski

Nick Lipcavage, (right) and John Nicosia learned how to repair a radio component coded non-repairable, saving more than \$200,000 per year.

saves further time.”

Nicosia noted that before the repair program was initiated, they could wait two weeks or more for new filters.

“Once the filter is repaired, we test it against a new filter using a spectrum analyzer and signal generator,” he said. “If the filter passes, we test it again in a mock up ARC-201 SINCGARS.”

Once radios are repaired and tested, they are stored until needed.

Lipcavage and Nicosia were the only technicians working on the ARC-201 when they made the suggestion in 2007, but now they work with two technicians and a student in the Student Career Experience Program.

Tobyhanna Army Depot is the largest full-service Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance, or C4ISR, maintenance and logistics support facility in the Department of Defense. Employees repair, overhaul and fabricate electronics systems and components, from tactical

field radios to the ground terminals for the defense satellite communications network.

Tobyhanna’s missions support all branches of the Armed Forces.

The depot is the Army Center of Industrial and Technical Excellence for Communications-Electronics, Avionics, and Missile Guidance and Control Systems and the Air Force Technology Repair Center for ground communications and electronics.

About 5,700 personnel are employed at Tobyhanna, which is located in the Pocono Mountains of north-eastern Pennsylvania.

Tobyhanna Army Depot is part of the U.S. Army CECOM Life Cycle Management Command. Headquartered at Fort Monmouth, N.J., the command’s mission is to research, develop, acquire, field and sustain communications, command, control, computer, intelligence, electronic warfare and sensors capabilities for the Armed Forces.

Fort Gordon Soldiers go home for holidays

Mel Slater
Media Relations

More than 6,000 Soldiers in training packed up and left Fort Gordon on Dec. 16-17 for holiday leave. Fort Gordon's 15th Regimental Signal Brigade sent Soldiers on their way home by bus,

airline, and automobile on Dec. 16 and continued throughout the morning of Dec. 17. The Signal Corps Band played music at the airport at 10 a.m. on Dec. 17. Approximately 600 Soldiers departed by bus from the Reserve Center. Soldiers traveling on flights

from Atlanta departed at 2:50 a.m. Some Soldiers were picked up by relatives at four locations on post beginning at 7 a.m. Small band ensembles played at Darling Hall and the Signal Theatre. The Army trainees must return to Fort Gordon by Jan. 3, 2009.



Photos by Bonnie Heater

Lt. Col. Tim Presby, 369th Signal Battalion commander, answers questions and explains to parents arriving at Darling Hall early Dec. 17 the process required to pick up their Advanced Individual Training Soldiers for holiday leave. Parents were required to show picture identification and sign their Soldier out for holiday leave. A prepared snack was given to each Soldier as they departed.

Federal health benefits open season extended into January

Each year, Office of Personnel Management works with Federal Employees Health Benefits carriers to strike a balance of protection against catastrophic events without shifting a high-premium burden to enrollees.

We are taking steps to provide additional protections for Federal employees participating in the FEHB Program who have non-emergency surgeries performed by out-of-network physicians. We have asked FEHB carriers to re-evaluate their benefits for non-emergency surgeries. We will communicate any benefit changes to you.

We are taking this action in response to concerns over a change in coverage in the Blue Cross Blue Shield out-of-network reimbursement that would have established a \$7,500 co-pay for out-of-network surgeries. We negotiated this change to address situations where enrollees could be billed tens of thousands of dollars for non-emergency surgeries performed by out-of-network providers, a practice known as balance billing.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU
You may make belated Open

Season enrollment changes to your FEHB Program, Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program and the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program if FEHB benefit changes affect your enrollment decisions in these programs. You will have an extended enrollment opportunity through January 2009 to make any enrollment changes in these programs.

Also, if you make a belated Open Season change to your enrollment in these programs, the effective dates of the belated change will vary among the programs. Depending on the timing of your change and your pay periods, it may take one or more pay periods for your Federal Benefits

deductions/allotments to be adjusted to match your new election. You need to know if you make a belated open season change and you have claims for services incurred in 2009 under your former plan, you and/or your provider may be responsible for reimbursing the former plan for any benefits paid.

EFFECTIVE DATES

Belated FEHB changes will take effect the first day of the pay period that starts on or after Jan. 1, 2009. Belated FEDVIP changes will take effect Jan. 1, 2009. Belated FSAFEDS changes will take effect on Jan. 1, 2009, or the day after the change is received, whichever is later.

SCRA Notice

If you are a member of the Signal Corps Regimental Association transfer your affiliation to Fort Gordon's local Adolphus Greely chapter. The organization now has a new Lifetime Member pin available for distribution. For information or assistance send e-mail to jenninjj@aol.com.



Duffel bags and personal luggage are neatly arranged along the walls early Dec. 17 at Gym 5. Parents could pick up their son or daughter Soldier starting at 7 a.m. Dec. 17 for the holiday vacation. More than 6,000 Soldiers in training at Fort Gordon left the Augusta area Dec. 16 -17 for holiday leave via plane, bus and privately owned vehicles.



(Above) Soldiers wait in their company area to be processed for holiday leave. (Below) Soldiers wait in a field across from Darling Hall Dec. 16 to be transported by special chartered buses to the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in Atlanta, Ga., to catch flights home for the holidays. Fort Gordon's 15th Regimental Signal Brigade sent Soldiers home for the holiday by bus, airline and privately owned vehicles Dec. 16 -17.



Annual Awards

Outstanding performers recognized

Charmain Z. Brackett
Correspondent

As a young single mom, Staff Sgt. Katrina Richardson wanted a better life for herself and her young son so she joined the Army.

“I had a child in high school, and it was tough going to college and working,” said Richardson, Fort Gordon’s Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, who was recognized Monday in a ceremony at Conrad Hall.

Ten years later, Richardson does not regret her decision and has high hopes for the future.

“I want Sgt. Major Clark’s job,” said Richardson of B Company, 447th Signal Battalion. “I’ve set a goal of being the first female Signal Corps Regimental Command Sergeant Major.”

On Monday, top civilians and Soldiers were honored for their achievements in 2008.

One surprised recipient was Jocelyn Cody, Fort Gordon’s volunteer of the year, who only learned about the award a few days before the ceremony.

Cody, whose husband Capt. Jason Cody is with the 35th Signal Brigade, joined the Army in 2005 when she became engaged to him, she said. They were married in 2006.

Because of the way she was treated by her Family Readiness Group leader at Fort Gordon, Beth Dixon, Cody decided to be an FRG leader. “When he was deployed, I was living in Dallas. Beth Dixon was my lifeline,” said Cody, who logged more



Photo by Charmain Z. Brackett

(From left) Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill, Pfc. Alicia Lyman, Staff Sgt. Katrina Richardson, Col. Jack Bryant, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon chief of staff, Sgt. 1st Class Rodolfo Fuentes, Ronald Schumpf, and Jocelyn Cody pose for a group photograph after the awards ceremony Dec. 15 at Conrad Hall.

than 700 hours of service to Families in 2008.

“When he came back, she picked me up from the airport and gave me a place to stay.”

Other honorees included the servicemember of the year, Pfc. Alicia Lyman, who works as a paralegal for the 206th Military Intelligence Battalion.

Lyman plans to attend college and law school. She’d like to become a JAG officer.

Sgt. 1st Class Rodolfo Fuentes is the 2008 instructor of the year. With the 15th Signal Brigade, Fuentes instructs more than 500 Soldiers each year.

Ronald Schumpf, who serves as the division chief of switching, transmission and microwave systems for the 551st Signal Brigade, was named civilian of the year. He has worked at Fort Gordon for 34 years.

Other awards went to Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill, with the 56th

Signal Battalion, who is Fort Gordon’s career counselor of the year.

Units receiving the Commanding General’s Top Production Retention Award included the 15th Regimental Signal Brigade, 369th Signal

Battalion and B Company, 447th Signal Battalion.

Staff Sgt. Ginger McKnight was Fort Gordon’s top producing career counselor, and Kenny Newborn was the top producing Reserve components career counselor.

Civilian of the Year

The Civilian of the Year for fiscal year 2008 is Ronald Schumpf, who serves as the division chief of Switching, Transmission, and Microwave Systems for the 551st Signal Battalion and 15th Regimental Signal Brigade. He plans, directs, and controls the framework for multiple courses of instruction leading to the award of a Military Occupational Specialty to initial entry and advanced train-



Ronald Schumpf

ees. He has worked at Fort Gordon for 34 consecutive years. To this day, training the best Signal Soldier in the world remains his passion and top priority.

Instructor of the Year

The Instructor of the Year, Sgt. 1st Class Rodolfo Fuentes assigned to the 15th Signal Brigade, has 20 years of military service under his belt and teaches an average of 500 Soldiers a year here on Fort Gordon as a Senior Instructor/Writer who has exceptional technical and professional competence in the 25P Common Core Course. He volunteers many hours on and off post and also involves the Soldiers he works with. Fuentes has hopes of becoming a first sergeant



Sgt. 1st Class Rodolfo Fuentes

soon and credits his Family for making him a better husband, father, and human being which he says is his life’s greatest accomplishment.

Volunteer of the Year

The volunteer of the year for fiscal year 2008 is Jocelyn Cody, from the 35th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade, whose dedication directly resulted in the support, care and involvement of 505 Families within the battalion. Cody led two different company Family Readiness Groups and managed the funding, planning, and execution of 16 battalion events and 10 company events. She set the standard for the 35th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade for the FRG monthly newsletters and trained the first two casualty response teams for the brigade at Fort Gordon.



Jocelyn Cody

Cody volunteered over 727 hours during which she managed to fill critical positions within the Family Readiness Group ranging from battalion FRG co-leader, headquarters and headquarters company FRG leader, rear detachment FRG leader, CARE Team leader and battalion event coordinator.

Annual award winners

Noncommissioned Officer of the Year

The Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for fiscal year 2008 is Sgt. 1st Class Katrina Richardson, who is assigned to Company B, 447th Signal Battalion as a signal support systems specialist. Richardson is responsible for leading, training, motivating and ensuring the health and welfare of over 415 Soldiers in Advanced Individual Training. Besides her normal duties she has

implemented a study program that has led to a total of seven Soldiers and three NCOs winning every board ranging from battalion level through post level. She consistently participates in community service that supports Fort Gordon and the local community. Richardson is also the Secretary of the Fort Gordon Chapter Sergeant Audie Murphy Club. Her keen military and leadership skills made this group



Sgt. 1st Class Katrina Richardson

of Soldiers top-notch in their performance.

Career Counselor of the Year

The Career Counselor of the Year, Staff Sergeant Kimberly Hill, assigned to Headquarters Headquarters Detachment, 56th Signal Battalion, has assisted commanders at all levels with sustaining the Army's readiness posture and achieving their retention mission. With her strong knowledge on all matters relating to the Army retention program she is able to ensure mission accomplishments, processing

reclassification actions and Bars to Reenlistment. She counsels, reenlists, extends and transitions qualified Soldiers in the Active and Reserve Components to achieve the command's retention mission. Her future goals include obtaining a Masters Degree in Psychology/Sociology and getting promoted to her next rank. Other goals are developing an organization to assist women fighting breast cancer and to continue to help



Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill

her daughter overcome some of the challenges of cerebral palsy.

Service Member of the Year

The Service Member of the Year for fiscal year 2008 is Pfc. Alicia Lyman who serves as a paralegal for the 206th Military Intelligence Battalion. Lyman is originally from Naples, N.Y. and has been stationed at Fort Gordon since November 2007. She has always volunteered for additional work to help others. She is a to-

tally poised, mature and dedicated Soldier. Future plans include attending the University of Tampa for Reserve Officer Training Corps in fall 2009, attending law school, and applying to become a Judge Advocate General Corps officer. When asked why she decided to join the Army, she said she enjoys adventure and being active.



Pfc. Alicia Lyman

Sports

Sports UPDATE

Child Youth and School Services

Parents interested in registering their children for the Child Youth and School Services Winter Basketball and Cheerleading Program can do so through **today** at the CYS enrollment office, Building 28320, on Lane Avenue. Children age 5 -14 of CYC patrons which include: dependents of active military, retired military, Department of Defense civilians and contractors are eligible to register. Bring a current sports physical for your child at the time of registration.

Games begin January 2009. Activity fee for basketball is \$45 and \$35 for cheerleading.

For more information call Brad McConnell at (706) 791-5104 or e-mail him at bradkmcconnell@us.army.mil.

Gordon Lanes

Located on 3rd Avenue in Building 33200, Gordon Lanes offers open bowling 9 a.m. each day. Enjoy the \$1 Mondays. Gordon Lanes is available for birthday parties. A full service bar is available Tuesday through Saturday.

For more information call (706) 791-3446.

Pinch Gut Puffer

On Jan. 10, 2009, the Greenbrier High School Cross Country team and the Augusta Striders Running Club will host the 30th running of the Pinch Gut Puffer, dating back to 1979. The race name reflects the legendary Pvt. Robert Puffer, and the downtown area, Pinch Gut, that was renowned for southern ladies during the 18th and 19th centuries. Puffer ran messages between two American Revolutionary Forces marching on British forts located on Reynolds Street. He made his hazardous run to Gen. Robert Lee in 28 minutes. The coordinated attack captured both British forts on June 5, 1781.

The 9 a.m. race, starts at the Standard Textile-King Mill in Augusta and ends at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in downtown Augusta running down the scenic Riverwalk for a 7.5k course. This year the race will include cash prizes for the top male and female who break "Puffer's time" while dressed in Revolutionary War Era costume.

Registration is \$15 for adults; \$12 for military, high school/middle school students or Augusta Striders member (must show current ID card on race day); late registration (after Dec. 26) is \$20 for everyone. Online registration is available at: www.pinchgutpuffer.com

For more information call Scott McWhorter at (706) 854-9397.

Gym #6 Weekend closure

Beginning this weekend Gym #6 will be closed on weekends.

For more information call Bill Browning (706) 791-6099.

Hilltop Stables named best riding place

Bonnie Heater
Signal staff

Until recently one of the best kept secrets on post was the Fort Gordon Hilltop Riding Stables.

According to Kate Kluna, an employee at the stables, stable managers were notified Dec.

15 by "Columbia County Magazine" that they were selected for an award for being the best place to ride a horse in Augusta. The publication publishes annually the "Top 100 Best Places in Augusta to visit."

Hilltop Stables which is located off North Range Road at 16th Avenue offers more than 250 acres of

trails for horseback riders.

It's considered a basic beginner barn, according to Kluna. "We offer lessons for beginners to advance riders," she explained. "Presently we have 13 government horses and 6 ponies available to ride. We also board horses," she said.

"We now have 15 boarders. In addition, we offer hay

rides, pony rides and organized trail rides for groups too.

Both the public as well as military members and their Families are welcome. The hourly riding rate for military members in the rank of E-5 or below is \$23, E-6 and above \$25; and civilians \$30. The stables are open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through

Sunday. Trail rides are available, if you call and make a reservation, at 11 a.m. Wednesday through Friday. Guided trail rides are conducted four times a day on Saturdays and Sundays.

To make a reservation or to learn more information about what is available at Hilltop Riding Stables call (706) 791-4864.



Photos by Bonnie Heater

(Above) Two of the horses at Fort Gordon's Hilltop Riding Stables munch on sweet hay while Kate Kluna, a Hilltop Stables employee uses a L4630 series Kubota tractor to stack one of the 1,000 pound hay bales into the hay barn. The live stock at the stable go through about 14 bales each month. A Columbia County magazine recently identified Hilltop Riding Stables as the best place in the city to enjoy recreational riding.

21st Signal Brigade upgrades to Combatives Level II

Staff Sgt. Lisa Garcia
21st Signal Brigade

FORT MEADE, Md. – The Soldier's Creed demands that "I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat."

In standing ready, many units are adapting and changing the way they train.

Expanding their knowledge of Combatives, gaining confidence in self defense and, for some simply having fun, the 55th Signal Company Combat Camera of the 21st Signal Brigade recently conducted their Combatives level II instructor certification training at Fort Meade, Md.

As with all areas of training affected by the lessons learned from the War on Terrorism, the Army has changed its approach to hand-to-hand combat. The techniques, called Combatives, are the accumulation of a variety of martial arts styles, the majority of which stem from Brazilian jiu-jitsu, with a focus on ground based grappling.

The purpose is to provide Soldiers a means to act within a weapons restricted environment or event. They must be prepared to use different levels of force when the use of deadly weapons is unavailable.

"If I find myself on a combat patrol and [my weapon] became disabled I now have the proper training to take out an enemy in hand-to-hand combat," said Spc. Patrick Wood, of the 55th Signal Company.

An additional benefit to Combatives training is that it will develop and instill the Army value of personal courage and improves self-confidence.

"It makes you not afraid to get close and fight the enemy if needed. It builds your confidence," Spc. Crystal Madriz, 55th Signal Company said.

"I am excited about Combatives in the Army today. Think about all the martial arts systems you have seen out there in the civilian world. We are creating and sustaining warriors on the battlefield with a comprehensive and dynamic program which ultimately saves lives.

"Combatives also does a great job of building individual Soldier confidence and the

warrior ethos.

One of the sayings that Matt Larsen likes to use is "The defining characteristic of a warrior is the willingness to close with the enemy." Philosophically, that 'enemy' could really be any adversity in life. Combatives, just like other martial art systems, helps build character and confidence. I think we do it in a very unique way," said Maj. Kevin Leavitt, Army National Guard, Europe Command, operations officer.

"It teaches you moves that are effective in fighting any type of enemy," Spc. Charles Probst, 55th Signal Company said.

"I believe the value of Combatives is not simply learning a living and expanding martial arts system, but incorporating the immediate aggressiveness inherent in the practical exercises that a Soldier can call upon when necessary. That is the obvious life saving, combat relevant and ready aspect of the Modern Army Combatives Program. The other side to the training is the competitive venue," explained Maj. James Pete, 21st Signal Brigade adjutant, Fort Detrick, Md.

"We saw a little of that just last week as Sgt. 1st Class Jared Roy and his team from 53rd Signal competed at Fort Benning's All Army Combatives Tournament," said Pete who was introduced to Combatives as a Basic Officer Leadership Course, Phase II Instructor at Fort Sill, Okla. in 2005.

Like the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program that's been in existence since 2002, the Modern Army Combatives Program provides a developmentally structured system for lethal and nonlethal methods of engagement at close quarters combat. Larsen, a retired noncommissioned officer from the 75th Ranger Regiment, developed and published field manual 3-25.150 while establishing the U.S. Army Combatives School at Fort Benning, Ga.

Soldiers who graduate from the level three and four Combatives instructor certification courses will receive recognition through a Military Occupational Specialty identifier (H3B and H4B respectively). The Marine Corps has

a colored belt system similar to many Asian martial arts: tan belt, gray belt, green belt, brown belt and black belt.

"I would like to further my training in Jiu-jitsu and one day go to Level III," said Wood level II Combatives certified.

The Army and Marine Corps operate in an environment where conflict may change from low intensity to high intensity over a matter of hours. Marines and Soldiers are also engaged in military operations other than war, such as peace-keeping missions or noncombatant missions, where deadly force may not be authorized.

During noncombatant engagements, Soldiers and Marines must determine if a situation warrants applying deadly force. To make the right decision, they must understand both the lethal and nonlethal close combat techniques needed to handle the situation responsibly without escalating the violence unnecessarily.

Recently, the Air Force has had to make adjustments to its training methodology as well. The War on Terrorism has brought duties previously geographically separate from the enemy within dangerous proximity. The Air Force has adopted a hand-to-hand combat system similar to the Modern Army Combatives Program in 2008.

The Modern Army Combatives Program provides a very professional and closely dictated set of rules that allows Soldiers all over the Army a basis for skills competition.

The All Army Combatives Tournament is thought to be where the best MACP fighters from Army units all over the world gather together in friendly competition to determine who is, in fact, the best.

According to the Website, www.moderncombatives.org, "Combatives, started in 2002 as a way to promote the efforts, training methods and techniques of the Modern Army Combatives Program as created by Matt Larsen."

Training in Combatives is physically demanding and at the same time, mentally demanding.

"It builds endurance also," said one Soldier in the 55th Signal Company said.



Photo by Spc. Venessa Hernandez

Signal Soldiers from the 21st Signal Brigade practice Modern Army Combatives Program skills in a training session designed to give warfighters hand-to-hand techniques.

"Combatives is great way to physical fitness. Core building, cross training, and total body workouts are the latest rage in the fitness world. Combatives training by its nature builds a solid body and core while increasing real fighting skills," Leavitt said.

Combatives training is making a difference. "It is saving lives on the battlefield. However, there are other ways that Combatives makes a difference. For example, I have personally used it to help prepare Military Training Teams to 'go downrange'. Getting a group of senior NCOs and officers together for the first time and trying to get them working as a team can be a challenge, especially when

you only have four weeks. Combatives proved to be a good 'ice breaker.' It got them talking and interacting quickly. It broke down the barriers and they immediately began to form bonds of trust. I watched this unfold over a period of a couple of hours, not days, in a Combatives class," Leavitt said. Sgt. 1st Class Stormy Graham, Fort Detrick's level 2 Instructor said, "The Soldiers like the Combatives training so much that we are trying to see if we can hold their training monthly instead of quarterly."

Graham said "hand-to-hand is traditional and Combatives is more relevant to today's Army." "It's a modern approach to take the enemy out."

Christmas wishes for those far away from home

Michael Marks

I had no Christmas spirit when I breathed a weary sigh,
and looked across the table where the bills were piled too high.
The laundry wasn't finished and the car I had to fix,
My stocks were down another point, the Chargers lost by six.
And so with only minutes till my son got home from school
I gave up on the drudgery and grabbed a wooden stool.
The burdens that I carried were about all I could take,
and so I flipped the TV on to catch a little break.
I came upon a desert scene in shades of tan and rust,
No snowflakes hung upon the wind, just clouds of swirling dust.
And where the reindeer should have stood before a laden sleigh,
eight Humvees ran a column right behind an M1A.
A group of boys walked past the tank, not one was past his teens,
Their eyes were hard as polished flint, their faces drawn and lean.
They walked the street in armor with their rifles shouldered tight,
their dearest wish for Christmas, just to have a silent night.

Other Soldiers gathered, hunkered down against the wind,
To share a scrap of mail and dreams of going home again.
There wasn't much at all to put their lonely hearts at ease,
They had no Christmas turkey, just a pack of MREs.
They didn't have a garland or a stocking I could see,
They didn't need an ornament—they lacked a Christmas tree.
They didn't have a present even though it was tradition,
the only boxes I could see were labeled "ammunition."
I felt a little tug and found my son now by my side,
He asked me what it was I feared, and why it was I cried.
I swept him up into my arms and held him oh so near
and kissed him on the forehead as I whispered in his ear.
There's nothing wrong my little son, for safe we sleep tonight,
our heroes stand on foreign land to give us all the right,
to worry on the things in life that mean nothing at all,
instead of wondering if we will be the next to fall.
He looked at me as children do and said it's always right,
to thank the ones who help us and perhaps that we should write.

And so we pushed aside the bills and sat to draft a note,
to thank the many far from home, and this is what we wrote:
"God bless you all and keep you
safe, and speed your way back
home.
Remember that we love you so, and
that you're not alone.
The gift you give you share with all,
a present every day,
You give the gift of liberty and that
we can't repay."

Copyright 2003 Michael Marks: "I
freely submit this poem for reprint
without reservation—this is an open
and grateful tribute to the men and
women who serve every day to
keep our nation safe.



Catholic
Holy Day Mass Schedule - 2008

Children's Mass – 5 p.m. Dec. 24
Midnight Mass – 10:30 p.m. Dec. 24
Christmas Day Mass – 10 a.m. Dec. 25
Mary Mother of God – 10 a.m. Jan. 1



St. Michael's Parish
Good Shepherd Chapel

MERRY
CHRISTMAS
2008 Protestant
Special Programs and Services

*** Bicentennial Chapel, on Brainerd Avenue**
7 p.m. Dec. 24 — A Service of the Nativity
9 a.m. Dec. 21 & 28 — Regular Liturgical Worship Services
11 a.m. Dec. 28 — Regular Worship Services

*** Barnes Avenue Friendship Chapel**
Midnight Dec. 31 — Watch Night
11 a.m. Dec. 21 & 28 — Regular Worship Services
(The 9:30 Contemporary Service will combine with the 11:00 Service.)

*** Faith Gospel Service, at Good Shepherd Chapel on Barnes Avenue**
Noon Dec. 21 & 28 — Regular Worship Services

Signal association stocks food bank

Charmain Z. Brackett
Correspondent

Pvt. Mark Focken wanted to help others this Christmas so he took \$95, asked his buddies for some cash and packed his and their rucksacks with canned goods to help the Golden Harvest Food Bank.

Focken, of the 369th Signal Battalion, brought in more than 300 pounds of food to help local Families as part of the Signal Corps Regimental Association, Adolphus M. Greeley Chapter, food drive.

Officials with the SCRA chapter met with those from the food bank and presented them with a check for \$500 and a Christmas tree tower of canned goods.

"Our total is 2,912 pounds, but that does not include the Christmas tree with 500 cans, and a couple of additional bins. I think the total will be closer to 3,500 pounds," said Lt. Col. Kristen Ellis, commander of the 442nd Signal Battalion and president of the SCRA chapter.

While SCRA provided the impetus, Ellis said it was the Soldiers who did the work.

More than 2,400 pounds of food came from two battalions. Members of the 551st Signal Battalion brought in more than 1,500 pounds of

food, and members of the 369th Signal Battalion collected more than 900 pounds.

Usually, the SCRA chapter focuses its efforts solely at Fort Gordon, Ellis explained, but two noncommissioned officers, who frequently volunteer at the food bank, said that the organization was in need of donations.

"It's an honor for me to be here today," said Mike Firmin, food bank executive director. "I thought I was just going to get a check, but as I began to talk to the troops here today, I found many of them had been involved with the food bank or the Faith Food Factory or the Masters Table soup kitchen.

I've just been so blessed by your giving."

Celebrating its 26th year, the Golden Harvest Food Bank provides food for those in need in 30 Georgia and South Carolina counties. Firmin said the organization is poised to distribute more than 12 million pounds of food by year's end.



Courtesy photo

Members of the Signal Corps Regimental Association bundle food and money they collected to help local charities during the Christmas season. The group contributed thousands of pounds of food to the Golden Harvest Food Bank in Augusta.

Jewish Holy Days

Hanukkah is from sundown Dec. 21 to Dec. 29

Community Chanukah Dinner
Augusta Jewish Community Center
5 - 8 p.m. Dec. 21
898 Weinberger Way
Evans, Ga. 30809
(706) 228-3636

Shabbat Dinner Congregation Children of Israel
(Reform) Chanukah
6 p.m. Dec. 19
3005 Walton Way Extension
Augusta, Ga. 30909
(706) 736-3140

Chapel Call

Collective Protestant Services

Sunday Worship

9:00 a.m. – Liturgical Service, Bicentennial Chapel
9:30 a.m. – Contemporary Worship Service, Friendship Chapel
10:30 a.m. – Eisenhower Army Medical Center Chapel
Noon – Faith Gospel Service, Good Shepherd Chapel
11:00 a.m. – Bicentennial Chapel
11:00 a.m. – Friendship Chapel

Catholic Services

Daily, Mon – Fri, 11:45 a.m., EAMC Chapel
Daily, Mon, Wed, Thurs. 11:30 a.m., Good Shepherd Chapel
Saturday, 3:30 p.m., Confessions, Good Shepherd Chapel
Saturday, 5:00 p.m., Vigil Mass, Good Shepherd Chapel

Sunday Masses

8:30 a.m., Good Shepherd Chapel
10:00 a.m., Good Shepherd Chapel
11:45 a.m., EAMC Chapel

Jewish Activities

Holy Day, Sabbath and Daily
Services available off post
Jonathan Shoenholz, (706) 787-1353

Islamic Services

Jumah (Friday) Prayer Services, Islamic Activities Center,
Building 38804 Academic Drive
Oct-Apr, 12:45-1:30; and Apr-Oct, 1:15-1:45
Retired CPO Marshall Abuwi - (706) 772-4303 (Leave message)

Denominational Services

LDS Service – Sunday 1:30-4:30 p.m., Friendship Chapel
LDS Representative is Ralph Wright - (706) 364-6297
Wiccan Service – Sunday 2 - 5 p.m. at Rel Support Ofc. (706) 868-8781

Religious Education

Children & Youth Classes

Sunday, 9:30 a.m. Protestant Sunday School, Religious Ed Ctr
Sunday, 11:30 a.m., Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Sacramental Preparation, Religious Ed Ctr (Sep-May)
Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., Faith Gospel Classes, Religious Ed Ctr
Youth Groups and Other RE Programs, Randy Dillard – (706) 791-4703

Adult Bible Studies
Sunday 9:30 a.m., Protestant Adult Studies, Religious Ed Ctr
Sunday 11:30 a.m., Catholic "God and Coffee", Family Life Ctr
Sunday 11:30 a.m., RCIA at Rel Support Office, (706) 791-4703
Tuesday Noon, EAMC Bible Study, Din Facility, 3rd floor
Tuesday 7:00 p.m., Prot Women of the Chapel, Bicentennial
Tuesday 7:00 p.m., Little Rock Study, Good Shepherd Chapel
Thursday 9:30 a.m., Prot. Women of the Chapel, Bicentennial
Wednesday 11:30 a.m., Post-wide Luncheon, Bicentennial
Wednesday 7:30 p.m., Discipleship Training, Friendship Chapel
Wednesday 7:00 p.m., Faith Gospel Svc at Rel. Ed. Ctr.
Wednesday 7:00 p.m., LDS FHE, Rel Support Ofc. (706) 364-6297
Tuesday Noon., 513th at Motor Pool Conf. Rm.
Tuesday 11:30 a.m., 116th MI GP Conf. Rm., Bldg 21719



Volunteer Corner
Interesting opportunities available

If you are interested in giving your time and efforts to any of the following volunteer opportunities in the Central Savannah River Area, contact Alia Naffouj at alia.naffouj1@us.army.mil. Provide your name, rank, organization, work and home telephone numbers. If your class is interested in accepting the cause as a community relations project, provide the complete names and rank of each volunteer with a designated point of contact and contact information. For more information, call (706) 791-1871.

NATIONAL VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT:
This Library of Congress project is aimed at collecting oral history interviews, memoirs, letters, diaries, photographs, and other original materials from veterans of World Wars I and II, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf Wars and the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts (2001-present). Those U.S. citizen civilians who were actively involved in supporting war efforts (such as war industry workers, United Service Organizations workers, flight instructors, medical volunteers, etc.) are also encouraged to contribute their personal narratives. Currently, the Augusta Historical Society and its volunteers are interviewing World War II veterans in the Central Savannah River Area as part of this project. If you are a history buff and are interested in first-hand accounts of

this war, you are needed to help interview these veterans. You will be given a 30 to 40-minute briefing that will teach you the skills you need to do the job. If that's not your forte, volunteers are also needed to download the interview tapes from the video camera to a DVD. For more information or to volunteer, contact Fred Gehle at (706) 738-8242 or Doug Hastings at (706) 832-6483.

HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS
Odyssey Health Care is a hospice organization who is looking for volunteers to assist with administration duties (file and answer phones) and patient support volunteers (read, watch movies, write letters and provide companionship). Completion of basic Hospice training is required and provided.

Learning SWET might save Soldiers’ lives

Rob McIlvaine
FMWRC Public Affairs

“During the first three weeks in Iraq, we had eight drownings,” said Bill Miller to the Army, Marine and civilian aquatics managers gathered to hear the latest techniques in aquatics at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas this past week.

Since those first weeks when America went to war in Iraq, over 200 have died as a result of their Stryker, tank, truck or Humvee overturning into a body of water.

“You wouldn’t think there would be so much water in a desert environment, but our Soldiers have to deal with two rivers and a canal as they traverse the battle zone,” said Miller, Aquatics Manager at Fort Lewis, Washington State.

Because of those first drownings, Major Phelps, 3rd BDE Rear Detachment Commander, contacted Bill Miller around the end of January 2004 and asked him to “do something more.”

“A few days later I called Pensacola, Coronado and Whidbey Island looking for answers,” Miller said.

The Naval Air Station at Whidbey Island had two helicopter SWETs (Shallow Water Egress Trainers) they were going to cut up the next day.

“I called Ray Smith, Command Diving Officer at the Naval Survival Training Institute in Pensacola to have the demolition halted and the SWETs transferred to Fort Lewis,” said Miller.

On March 3, Bruce Antonowicz and Miller were trained on the SWETs at Whidbey Island, and Ray Smith sent over the helicopter training SOPs.

After several tries, said

Miller, he and the Department of Labor (DOL) finally agreed on a design which was tested with pool staff at Fort Lewis to ensure the unit was as safe as possible. Design changes were made by the welders at DOL, and the new SWETS were delivered to the pools at Fort Lewis in August 2004.

“By November, over 1,200 Soldiers were put through the dunker training before leaving for Iraq,” said Miller.

Because of the success, the U.S. Army Family and MWR Command asked Miller to develop an Army-wide program for the SWET in September 2007. Five months later a video starring Janice Canion, pool manager, and Bruce Antonowicz, Jr. was produced to train SWET instructors.

By April 2008, the Army SWET SOP, SWET Instructor LOI, Risk Assessment and Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services lists were completed by Miller.

“I look at this as combat water survival,” said Ernie Kanaki, FMWRC Aquatics Manager.

Not many of the 90 aquatics leaders from around the world took the opportunity to get the SWET training at Fort Sam Houston Aquatic Center during the Army aquatic conference. Some, however, opted to jump in the pool for Aquatic Physical Training for Wounded Warriors conducted by Mary Wykle, PhD, and instructed by Laurie Denomme.

“Of the 30 who took the SWET course, many were very nervous,” Miller said. “It’s not easy being blindfolded and strapped in by a three-point hitch and dunked in the water. You have to learn to relax and get your bearings.”

When a Humvee overturns, the Soldier has a three-point seat belt keeping him in and he or she often becomes disoriented because of the resulting bubbles and river floor dust being thrown up around the cabin area.

“We teach them to orient themselves by feeling for the door handle, unhooking their seatbelt and then getting out. We do it the first time two times for each person. The first time you get to feel for the door handle and simply get out. The second time, you’re blindfolded and one door is locked,” said Miller.

According to Miller, this simulated real life conditions. The Humvee turns upside down in cold water, you have 0 to low visibility and you’re tangled with cords.

The stainless steel frame Miller designed has a seat that two instructors can turn over when the student is ready. With the unit placed at the shallow end of the pool in four feet of water, simulating the approximate depth of a river or canal, safety is the main concern when dunking the Soldier in this training environment.

“Each installation that is a power projection platform has been selected to receive a SWET unit,” said Miller.

Fort Sam Houston was the first to get the unit since its development at Fort Lewis, mainly because of the conference. Fort Shafter in Hawaii received two during the first few weeks in December with

Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Fort Riley and Baumholder, Germany getting the remainder of the units for 2008.

“FMWRC is planning to deliver eight more units in 2009 to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Fort Stewart, Georgia, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Fort Carson, Colorado, Fort Bliss and Fort Hood in Texas, Fort Polk, Louisiana, and Fort Richardson, Alaska,” said Kanaki.

“If you’re the aquatics manager, we’re going to train you so you can train others at your installation,” said Miller.

About 10 to 12 Soldiers can be trained in an hour so usually a squad, rather than a platoon, will be asked to go through the training.

Over 7,000 Soldiers have been trained using the SWET unit in the past four years. At a cost of approximately \$4,500 per unit, plus shipping, the price is well worth the lives saved.

“After the training, they usually say, ‘we’ll never drive near water again,’ but this just isn’t possible. Hopefully, the training will help prevent further tragedies from an overturned vehicle in water,” said Miller.

School

from page 1

“It was a pleasure to work with the Soldiers on these computer projects. Everyone was enthusiastic realizing how important it was to get the computers ready for the students to use. In one Saturday morning at A. R. Johnson the Soldiers accomplished the task that would have taken my staff several weeks to finish. My staff looks forward to continuing this partnership at other schools that will be receiving new Dell computers provided by SPLOST [Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax] in January.”

Carol Taylor
Richmond County Board of Education
Director of Educational Media and Technology

These are the Fort Gordon Soldiers recognized at the Richmond County Board of Education meeting Dec. 11 for assistance provided in setting up computer systems at county schools:

Staff Sgt. Lyneair Aikens
Staff Sgt. Antwhuen Alston
Staff Sgt. Teresa Byrd
Staff Sgt. Leticia Carbajal
Staff Sgt. Antoine Derrick
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Eberwein
Staff Sgt. Linton Francois
Sgt. Antonio Gonzalez
Sgt. 1st Class Robert Hall
Staff Sgt. Alunda Hopkins
Staff Sgt. Steve Hoxie
Staff Sgt. Gregory Koenig
Staff Sgt. Christopher Kratzner
Staff Sgt. Christopher Marshall
Staff Sgt. Tamica McDowell
Staff Sgt. Casey Moore
Staff Sgt. Keith Myers
Staff Sgt. Jason Reformat
Small Group Leader: Staff Sgt. Nicholas Toler
Senior Group Leader: Sgt. 1st Class Nelson Mendoza
Branch Chief: 1st Sgt. William Evans

Commandant: Command Sgt. Maj. Vernon Praymous

The students who participated in the Freedom Park School project graduated from their course and were unable to attend but were recognized as well.

Sgt. 1st Class Brian Gaddy was their Small Group Leader.
Staff Sgt. Leslie Anjou
Staff Sgt. William Jimenez
Staff Sgt. Grayling Johnson
Staff Sgt. Brock White
Staff Sgt. Marquise Young
Staff Sgt. Robet Williams
Staff Sgt. Franklin Ball
Staff Sgt. Luis Rivera
Staff Sgt. Guillermo Montoya
Staff Sgt. Gerson LLiran
Staff Sgt. Robert Clarke
Staff Sgt. Krostopher Digiulio
Staff Sgt. Aaron Thomas
Staff Sgt. Justin Sewell
Staff Sgt. Mary Mbaye
Staff Joshua Burnett
Staff Sgt. Cylenia Harvey
Staff Sgt. Scott Garrett
Staff Sgt. Kyle McDonald
Staff Sgt. Chandra Keys



Spectrum



Trees for Troops delivers joy



Photo by Charmain Z. Brackett

Matthew Gay at his Christmas tree farm.

Local tree grower donates trees

Charmain Z. Brackett
Correspondent

Two local growers participated in this year's Trees for Troops program. Trees were distributed on Dec. 11.

Gay's Christmas Tree Farm in Augusta and Carter Christmas Tree Farm in Grovetown each donated trees to the program.

"The more I've learned about it, the more I wish I had gotten involved sooner," Matthew Gay, owner of Gay's Christmas Tree Farm, said.

Since his farm is not located far from Fort Gordon's Gate 5, Gay was allowed to keep his trees close to home, he said.

Gay's Christmas Tree Farm is located on Tobacco Road, and he said he has many customers from Fort Gordon.

A Christmas tree grower for more than a decade, Gay's Leyland Cypress has taken top honors at the annual Georgia National Fair each October in Perry, Ga., where he has won best of show three of the past four years. The year he didn't take home best of show, he placed second.



Photo by Bonnie Heater

Retired Sgt. 1st Class Robert Howard of Augusta selects his Christmas tree from the many trees donated to the Trees for Troops program. The trees were donated by Christmas tree growers in the United States. They were delivered to the parking lot near the post's dinner theatre by FedEx.

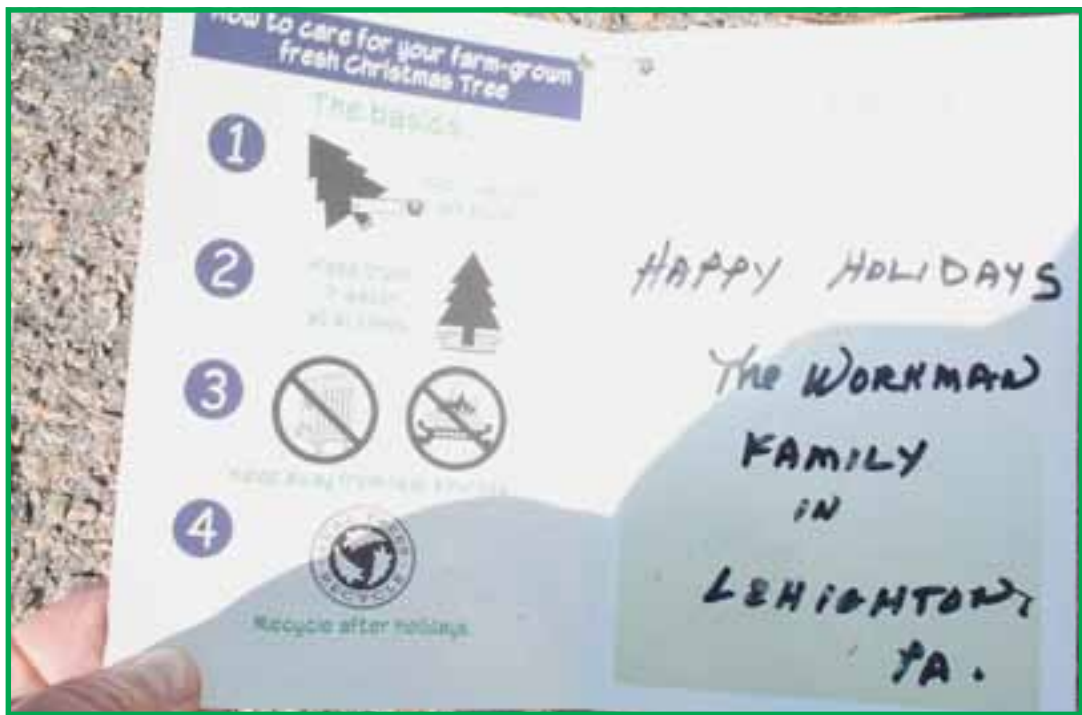


Photo by Bonnie Heater

Cards were found on several of the Trees for Troops. A different card was tied to each Christmas tree.

Here are some more of those special messages on the cards:

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year. We appreciate everything you are doing to keep us safe. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

The Staff at Terrill Middle School, Scotch Plains, N.J.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! We have raised this money by selling pretzels at our school. We raised about 600 dollars. We brought trees for the troops. You are lucky this tree came to you. We are also very thankful, because your Family is serving in the war for us. So we can be protected and live a good life. Since you celebrate Christmas, I hope you like the Christmas tree. I hope you have a fun time decorating the tree. Thank you again and have a good Christmas.

Love, Your Brookside Friends

Dear U.S. Soldiers and Family, Thank you for serving in the Army and risking your life for Americans. We appreciate what you've done so much, we think you deserve something. That is why our class held a pretzel sale to raise money so we were able to give you the Christmas tree. We understand that it can be tough for you in the Army, so we decided to give our profits towards the fundraiser, Trees for Troops. We really hope you have a Merry Christmas with what we have given you. Have a nice Christmas!

From: Two students in fifth grade in New Jersey

Hello and Merry Christmas from all of us. We hope you enjoy this Christmas tree as much as we enjoyed picking it out and cutting it down at Keris Tree Farm in Allentown, New Jersey. Your tree ["Lucy Citrus Anderson"] grew up on a beautiful small town farm with many other trees. We chose "Lucy" because although she was among so many, she is very special, just like you. Thank you for you (and your loved ones) courage, strength and commitment in keeping all of us in the USA protected and free. Without you there would be no U.S. of A. Merry Christmas, special prayers and wishes for a Happy New Year.

Girl Scout Troop 71692, Allentown, N.J.



Photo by Bonnie Heater

Petty Officer 1st Class Richard Shrout helps Petty Officer 2nd Class Sharmel Wright pick out a Christmas tree from the many trees donated to the Trees for Troops program.



Photo by Charmain Z. Brackett

Soldiers help put a Christmas tree in a vehicle for the trip home.